575 nationalities. The Club does valuable service in providing entertainment for some of the Pakistanis in Bahrain, it organises various sports, including volley-ball, cricket, football and physical exercises as well as indoor games. Once or twice a month the Club holds Housey sessions which are well attended by members and visitors. Also very useful in Bahrain, where there is a shortage of public libraries, is this Club's library, which as well as being supplied with books is provided with the latest newspapers and magazines.

*Bahrain Sports Club.* This Club was founded in 1918 under the patronage of H.H. the Ruler of Bahrain and other local notables. Its aim is to provide recreational and social amenities, which include a library, for its 250 members, most of whom are Indian nationals.

The Club premises are situated in Quadibiya, on Belgrave Road, and include the main club buildings, two tennis courts and an indoor badminton court. There are also two table-tennis tables and facilities for chess, bridge, etc. The Club's major activity is cricket, in which it excels, having won the Championship Shield of the Bahrain Cricket Association for the three years 1950-52. Tennis and badminton tournaments are also held every year for cups donated by the Bahrain Petroleum Company and by other Bahrain firms. Once a month there is a tombola evening to which the general public is admitted.

The Club is managed by a committee of seven members who are elected every January.

The membership fee to the Club is *Rs.*3 per month, members also pay *Rs.*7 per month for the use of the tennis courts, *Rs.*3 per month for the use of the badminton court and a library deposit of *Rs.*5.

*Gymkhana Club.* This Club, which has been in existence for some years, is for the benefit of the British and American inhabitants of Manama, although there are also some members in Awali and Muharraq. The Club premises, attractively surrounded by gardens, are to the south of the Racecourse and include, in addition to the Club building itself, a swimming bath, tennis courts and a patio where dances are frequently held.

Applications for membership to the Club should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, the Gymkhana Club.

There are other clubs in Bahrain, The Ferdousi and Gulistan Clubs, the Aruba in Manama, the Nahada in Hedd and clubs in some of the villages, but these are not likely to be of interest to visitors to Bahrain as their activities are more specialised.

## SPORTS

526 575 *Sailing.* Sailing is a pleasant relaxation which, in Bahrain, can be enjoyed all the year round. The recently formed Royal Air Force Sailing Club is actively promoting interest in sailing and dinghy racing

among residents of Bahrain and is filling a long-felt want for an organised centre for the small boat enthusiast. The R.A.F. Club was started in July 1951 mainly to provide a form of recreation for members of the R.A.F. stationed in Bahrain, but later it was found that many of the Britishers and Americans resident in Bahrain were interested in sailing so it was decided to admit fifty civilian members. In August 1952 the membership of the club numbered eighty. 526 575

The Club premises are open daily from noon to 8 p.m. except Fridays and Sundays when they open at 10 a.m. Races are held every week-end and there is a Club Day on the first Friday of each month. At the time of writing there are twelve sailing boats and numerous other craft at the Club, of the sailing boats, four are the property of the club, three loaned to it and the remainder are privately owned. There are also half-a-dozen dinghies, including four 14-foot "G.P. Dinghies" designed by Jack Holt—a class which it is planned to develop and also to encourage among private owner members. Helmsmanship is taught and tests must be passed before members are permitted to take out club boats. Sailing matches are arranged from time to time with the sailing club at Qatar.

The Club buildings are ideally situated in what used to be the B.O.A.C. Marine Airport. The premises are at the end of a short jetty which extends into the sea from a point of the shore of Manama in Quadabiya, and the areas protected from the full strength of the north-west and north winds by the mainland of Bahrain. The Khor Khaliya, the bay to the east of the Club, provides pleasant and safe water for races and the training of beginners. For qualified helmsmen who know these reef-ridden coastal waters there are many sailing excursions round the coast and to nearby islands.

The entrance fee to the R.A.F. Sailing Club for civilian members is 25 rupees with a monthly subscription of 10 rupees, the subscription for officers is *Rs.*5 and for airmen, *Rs.*3. Wives and families of members are included, paying no fees and having no voting rights.

Enquiries about membership of the Club, for which there is a long waiting list, should be made to the Hon. Secretary on forms supplied by him.

*Fishing*. "A S-T-R-I-K-E—Turn the boat!"; a pause, and then that triumphant warning scream from the reel which is music to all fishermen—"He's on." In Bahrain "he" may be a 7-lb. "Chanad" or a 40-lb Barracuda—they will both take the same 6-inch Wilson spoon or Stewart "wobbler." 526 226

The most popular method of fishing is Trolling, from any motor driven boat which can maintain a trolling speed of about 3-4 knots. A variety of rods are used—from light to heavy—and the humble hand-line is just as effective, although obviously not so much sport. Nickelled spoons, feather jigs and natural bait are the usual lures used for trolling. The best natural bait is a small gar-fish ("silts" in Arabic)

526 226 [136] about 6-in. to 9-in. long which trolls well because of its streamlined shape. The fish most commonly caught by trolling are listed hereunder; those marked with an asterisk have also been reported, but on rare occasions :—

Sea bass.
King Mackerel ("Chanad" or Indian seer).
Leer Fish.
Rock Cod.
Barracuda.
*"Sikkan" (English name unknown but weighs up to 60 lbs.).
*Sailfish.
*Shark (usually sand sharks up to 150 lbs.).
*Bonito.

Bottom fishing in the deeper water a mile or so off the coast, using crab, cuttlefish or large prawn as bait, yields Queen-fish, "Hamriyah" (English name unknown but similar to red snapper) and several kinds of rays, in addition to three or four of the above-listed species caught trolling. Many of these fish weigh 30 to 60 lbs. and give very good sport on a light sea-rod with a reel carrying about 250 yards of cutty hunk or nylon line with 18 or 24 lb. breaking strain. The American type 5-star drag reel is popular for trolling because by insulating the shock of the initial fierce strike, it enables lighter tackle to be used. Sailfish weighing about 55 lb. have been caught near the Black Buoy, the northern entrance marker to the Sitra channel, on at least two authenticated occasions. A game-fishing maxim says that "where there are sailfish, there are marlin" and, although not yet reported in local Bahrain waters, marlin have been seen as near as Umm Said on the east coast of the Qatar peninsular.

Bass (Ar. "Zbaiti"), "Shari" (12-in. long, drab colour), "Saafi" (about 24-in. long, white colour) and a colourful variety of small fish up to 5-6 lb. are caught fishing from the shore at many places around the coast. A trout rod or other light bait-casting rod with a 2½-oz. tip gives excellent sport and can be most exciting when, for instance, a 10 lb. sea bass is hooked and landed, as was done with such tackle in the 1952 season.

The spring and autumn are the best fishing seasons, although fish are sought and caught by the enthusiasts throughout the winter, except during the very cold spells. The hot summer months of July, August and September are the worst or fishing in Bahrain, the Bahrainis say that the fish go out to the deeper water to keep cool, in which they are both missed and envied by the local "Isaac Waltons," left ashore to prepare their tackle for the coming autumn season.

526 231 *Riding and Racing*. Bahrain offers excellent opportunities for riding, but it is only recently that these have been recognised by European and American residents in the Islands. The BAPCO Club has a stable of twelve horses at Awali and riding classes are held for children and adults. In Manama a number of Arab merchants keep horses for

1: Belgrave F-3 (no date) 1953 MZ2 Bahrain MZ2

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The Results of a Fishing Expedition. *Photo: Y. A. Shirawi.*

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A Village Pool, North Sitra. *Photo: The Author.*

Rifaa Ash-Sharqi. *Photo: The Author.*

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**A Bahrain Football Team.**

hacking as well as for racing and they are often willing to lend them to those interested in riding. With the exception of a few horses owned by Europeans, the remainder in Bahrain are the property of H.H. The Ruler, of the State Police and of other members of the Ruling Family. The keeping of horses in Bahrain is an expensive matter as the cost of fodder is high.

There are at the time of writing only two race meetings a year, these are held at the Manama Racecourse on Jufair Road. The race meetings take place in the spring and autumn, but it is hoped shortly to increase their number. The Races are run by a committee which receives the full support and patronage of the Ruler and there is a Totalisator under Government control. The races are very popular in Bahrain and not only is the Enclosure always packed with many hundreds of Arabs and Europeans but the whole length of the track is lined with onlookers who during the morning of the races come in buses, taxis and on foot to the Racecourse. The races vary in distance from four furlongs to one mile, some are handicaps and others are open. The Race Meetings of Bahrain are one of the social events of the year and people come from Dhahran and Qatar for the occasion. The brightly coloured dresses of the ladies, the equally colourful clothes of the Arabs and the more sombre get-up of the Englishmen are worthy of this Gulf Ascot !

*Bathing.* Around the shores of Bahrain are a number of excellent beaches, particularly to the south of the island, away from the villages. Unfortunately the coast of Bahrain is so shallow that it is often necessary to walk for a long way into the sea before deep water is reached. Swimming and picnicing is particularly pleasant at Ras al-Barr and along the west coast of Bahrain below Zellaq. There is no real danger from swimming in the sea, sharks are very rarely seen and it is only the occasional ray that should be treated with respect. Swimming shoes are, however, very necessary as the sharp coral stone in many places along the coast causes bad cuts which are liable to go septic. At Zellaq there is the BAPCO Plage which, in the summer, sees an attendance of over 50 a day and as many as 200-300 bathers at week-ends.

There are a number of places for fresh water bathing, the Pool at Adari is very pleasant but in the summer is inclined to be crowded. There are also pools at Ain Hakim, Sitra and elsewhere. At Awali there are two swimming baths and the Gymkhana Club also possesses a large bath situated in very attractive surroundings. In all the natural springs and in the baths which receive their water direct from artesian wells, the water has a temperature of about 83 degrees ; this remains the same in winter and in summer so that in the former the water seems warm, in the latter, cool.

*Other Sports.* In addition to these activities it is possible to play many other games in Bahrain, including tennis, golf, hockey, cricket, volley-ball, football, etc.

There are a number of public and private tennis courts in Bahrain, in Awali the courts of the BAPCO Club, and in Manama the Bahrain

526 529 Sports Club, and the Gymkhana Club have courts and the Ahli Club is also building some. Tennis is often played at night, by the light of batteries of flood-lamps, and there are many tennis matches between Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. There are also cups and shields for Bahrain tournaments.

Bahrain has two golf courses, one in Manama, around the Race-course, the other near Awali. The latter belongs to the BAPCO Club and is situated in the desert between Awali and Sitra. As with other sports, golf teams from Bahrain play matches with teams from other parts of the Persian Gulf, but this is a sport that is confined to Europeans and Americans, the Arabs not yet having taken it up.

Football is one of the most popular sports in Bahrain, both with Arabs and Europeans, and has been played since the late 'twenties although there was no general organisation for its encouragement. In 1952, however, the Bahrain Football Association was formed and was supported by the Ahli Club's team, the Muharraq Sports team and the teams of the Gulistan Club, the Ferdousi Club, the R.A.F., the International Aeradio Company and the Bahrain Petroleum Company. It is the eventual aim of the Association to build a sports stadium in Bahrain, but till this object can be achieved, the Association does what it can to encourage sporting spirit in Bahrain and to organize matches and tournaments.

The other games mentioned above are also played, but on a smaller scale than the ones already described in detail. There is no doubt, however, that with the cinemas, with the clubs and with the opportunity of participation in the many sports played in Bahrain there are many ways of spending one's leisure hours and enjoying one's stay in Bahrain.

## CHAPTER II

## GARDENING IN BAHRAIN

247 GARDENING in Bahrain often seems to be a frustrating and disappointing hobby, but in time and with perseverance satisfactory results can be obtained and it is possible in the cold season to have a garden full of colour and flowers. The soil is thin and salty, the water is somewhat brackish and the strong north wind which blows in the winter is apt to play havoc with young seedlings. All gardens are irrigated as the rainfall is very small. Rain, when it does fall, often does more harm than good, it splashes the salty surface soil on to the stems of plants, shrubs and sometimes trees which causes small plants to die and often damages trees and shrubs. It is to prevent this damage that gardeners irrigate the ground immediately after rain, a labour which appears rather superfluous to people who do not appreciate the reason.

are chairs, tables, window curtains, often framed pictures and photographs, and usually a gramophone; in the houses of the wealthier people there is often a wireless set. Coffee shops reflect the change in ways of living. They are important institutions in Bahrain and take the place of clubs or cafes in Europe. Each has its regular clientele, but the popularity of individual coffee shops varies according to fashion. Ten years ago, coffee shops were usually small shops inside the bazaar, furnished with a few rough benches, where little else than coffee could be obtained. To-day, most of the coffee shops are elaborately decorated and illuminated, provided with little tables and chairs, and a gramophone or a wireless set which plays loudly and incessantly, relaying Arabic programmes to the customers. Some of the coffee shops are divided into two parts: in one part only coffee and drinks are served, and in the other part regular meals can be obtained, including Indian and Persian dishes, bread, cakes, and ices in the summer. Most of the proprietors are foreigners—Indians, Persians, and Iraqi, who are more enterprising in these matters than the local people. The bigger coffee shops are now referred to by the public as 'otels.'

**Games.** The popularity of games is another recent development during the last ten years. Before this, nobody played games except the men of the Levy Corps, who were made to do so, which was regarded as a peculiarity of the Commanding Officer. To-day, there are half-a-dozen local football teams and several hockey teams, who play against each other or against teams of sailors or Europeans from the Bahrain Petroleum Company. They play well, and are very keen, and every match attracts a large and interested audience from the town. Many of the parents of the young men who play disapprove of hockey and football, which they consider dangerous and unnecessary, chiefly because they did not play themselves when they were young. There is an entire lack of class distinction in these games: the sons of shaikhs play side-by-side with policemen, clerks, and taxi drivers. Although games have improved the physique of those who play them, the use of motor cars instead of horses or donkeys has caused a great many people to become soft and flabby. Sons of wealthy fathers, especially the young members of the Ruling Family, have entirely left off taking any exercise. They use a car to go a few yards, they never walk, and the only occasion on which they ride a horse is during marriage celebration or on public holidays, such as the annual accession celebrations.

**Class Changes.** The depression in the pearl trade and the recent improvement in the bazaars has caused an upheaval in financial positions, and with it a certain change in the political importance of classes. This change is gradually, though unwillingly, being appreciated by the Ruling Family. In the days when the pearl trade was flourishing, pearl merchants and nakhudas were the monied classes, and their money gave them great power, which they did not scruple to use for their own benefit. To-day, the men who used to be worth lacs of rupees are, in many cases, almost bankrupt, and petty traders, shop-keepers, and men who happen to own property in Manamah, are becoming the monied class. The old powerful pearl merchants were, in many cases, self-made men who started life as divers, but their wealth made them important and, though most of them could neither read or write, they were the people who mattered in Bahrain. Many of these men have lost all their influence because their money has gone. The class which is now becoming prosperous is more progressive, more mixed, and better educated, but as a community it does not hang together because, unlike the case of the pearl industry, its prosperity does not depend upon one trade alone. One of the serious disadvantages of the change is that the pearl industry provided work, during part of the year, for many thousands of men, but the people who are now making money provide little employment for the people. At present, about five thousand divers are working in the oil field. They are making a great deal more money than they would normally make from diving and, besides earning money, they are paying back their debts to the nakhudas by regular monthly instalments, so both parties are satisfied; but this employment is not permanent and, when present construction work at the oil field is finished, there will be a sudden increase in unemployment which will have to be dealt with by the Government.

**The Ruling Family.** The life and outlook of the members of the Ruling Family, with a few notable exceptions, has changed less than that of any other community. Although there is a great difference between the outlook of the older men and those who have grown up during the last ten years, the attitude of the family as a whole is